

EVANGELICAL INQUIRER.

{ NO. 9. }

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"There is one body, and one Spirit, as also ye, are called in one hope of your calling : One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and with all, and in" all Christians.—PAUL the Apostle—McKnight's translation.

RECORDS OF SECTARIANISM—CHAP. II.

The remainder of the proceedings of the Washington Baptist Church, at the memorable meeting alluded to in the 7th No. of the Inquirer, when they condemned one of the Lord's institutions and excluded its advocates, is now presented to our readers by another writer of responsibility. Reader, examine these things and say that no reformation is necessary. EDITOR.

For the Inquirer,

Dear Sir,—Upon hearing that you had published the first day's proceedings of the Baptist Church at Washington, Mason county, Ky., when nineteen members were excluded for "weekly communion," as the articles of impeachment termed it, I declared I would send a statement of the second day, that all might have an opportunity of forming an opinion. I have not seen the publication, nor heard its contents stated, and if I fall into the error of relating any occurrences of the second which really took place on the first, it will correct itself when the fact is known that the author of the first was not present on the second day, and the author of this was present all the time and vouches for the truth of the following statement as a man and a christian.

Sunday morning met, according to adjournment, and the orders being read of the day before, a man rose and addressed the moderator in the most respectful terms, but had not time to make known his object, when the Clerk called him to order, and he was decided by the Chair to be out of order, for which he apologized and said that it was parliamentary to make motions and offer petitions before proceeding to other

business after reading the orders of the day, and appealed to the history of our own times, the journals of congress and the state legislatures, yet still he was decided to be out of order, for "we, said the Clerk, are now going to business." Yes sir, was responded; and that is the very reason I beg to be indulged before you commence; but order was cried by the Clerk and echoed by the Chairman and perhaps others; and the man took his seat evidently embarrassed, observing audibly, "if you knew the object of my motion you would not so decide, it was to become a member of the church, which I would have asked yesterday, but was informed that according to a standing rule I was one without ceremony, having the same Lord, the same faith, and the same Baptism," to which the Clerk responded "*it was not the rule*, for this church receives its members before baptism" and added, "you know very well sir, that there will be objections to your joining this church." The man replied "that he did know it and if he had the slightest hint of it, he never would have asked admission." The Clerk added "*well I know it.*" And here the first scene ended, greatly to the mortification and discomfiture of this newly baptized member, who was a lawyer of more than 20 years practice and residence in the town of Washington and whose wife was among the oldest members of the church and under trial for what she considered her duty and privilege, to celebrate and show forth the death and sufferings of the Saviour every first day of the week, if the disciples met that often.

But Messrs. George Mefford, Thomas M. Morton, Willis Ballenger, William Wilson and Harvey Holton repeatedly addressed the Judges during the day in behalf of those who were charged with the grievous crime just stated; for Morton and Holton were not under trial, but believing that the disciples had a right to break bread every first day of the week without a clergyman, united in praying the Judges to forgive, or to postpone, consider and deliberate before they passed

sentence of condemnation. Mefford was peculiarly happy in the effort he made to show that there was no express law against it, and that instead of being excluded, the church ought to bear with them, as *weak brethren*, even if they would not commune with them every first day, yet suffer the accused to commune with the church quarter yearly, and so mutually bear with one another. Some thought his accusers shed tears and they were not able to reply, for he concluded by saying that if they would *tell him in what he had offended he would ask pardon*; we understood him to mean whether he had offended against the *rule* of the church, or the law of Jesus Christ. For they were not informed, I think, during the trial; and some ill-natured members, but those you know who are excluded are apt to complain, still insist that there is not even a *rule* of the church against them. There is an order or resolution that they will take the sacrament quarter yearly, but none that they shall *not* take it oftner they say; and Mr. Mefford boldly challenged the Clerk to produce the rule and said members were present who had more than once asked to see it, but were not allowed; and I have not seen the man yet who has ever seen their precious book of rules; it is kept like the laws of a certain emperor, who was called the bloody emperor, because his subjects who were amenable to the laws had no opportunity of reading them.

I would not attempt to do justice to the arguments of any gentlemen in the defence. Thomas Morton and Harvey Holton, though not under trial, acquitted themselves like men, but were frequently called to order by the Clerk, who politely assisted Mr. George Morton, upon whom they almost forced the office of Moderator; notwithstanding he so modestly declined it because he was in bad health and unacquainted with the duties of the office, as he said; and whenever the states attorney, for Mr. Vaughn's conduct was so much like that of prosecuting attorney, that he was by mistake called so, gave notice, the Clerk called to order

and then Mr. George Morton would call to order too, and whether the speaker was out of order or not, he desisted the moment he heard the Moderator; he is so deservedly loved by saint and sinner that he commands universal esteem; and hence it became necessary before the diabolical design could be effected, to deceive him and secure his patronage. On Sunday morning, however, as he would not be entirely led, as I conjectured by Mr. Vaughn and the Clerk, for they were *one*, and the Clerk knowing the esteem in which Mr. Vaughn was held, had taken occasion to say, "he who speaks against Mr. Vaughn speaks against me," moved to appoint a gentleman from Mayslick Moderator in Mr. Morton's room, but Thomas Morton insisted that every church ought to furnish its own officers, or acknowledge their inability; and in the latter event he named *Chambers & Beatty*, two eminent lawyers hard by, well acquainted with parliamentary order, either of whom he thought would fill the office well. The gentleman from Maysville modestly declined the office, saying that every church ought to have its own members for officers and Mr. George Morton was compelled to retain his seat, but the Clerk saved him from putting questions and calling order until he with his more acute penetration saw the proper time, or when Mr. Vaughn suggested it, as was after the case, when the secret manner of getting up the meeting was talked of, or want of notice mentioned. Finally, Thomas Morton declared that in his opinion argument was unavailing, and that if an angel from Heaven was present and was to speak in favor of the accused, that the decree had gone forth, was made up and would be pronounced; and indeed when Mr. Vaughn summed up the evidence, and in this country the states attorney always speaks last, and when the Clerk put the question to the brethren and sisters in favor of condemnation, he told them "they had certainly not now to form opinions, that he reckoned they had already formed them," notwithstanding he had called Thomas Morton to order

shortly before for intimating as much. But the question being put, the resolution was adopted excluding nineteen as respectable members as belonged to the church, for no other crime than that stated, of differing in opinion with their brethren as to their privileges of the supper and exercising that privilege without a priest.

I was a looker-on only, not among either party; and believe I never witnessed such sorrow and sighing. It was not confined to the excluded members, no indeed, for though they shed tears they were tears of joy, that they were accounted worthy to be thus persecuted for Christ's sake, they were sorry to be separated as some were from mothers, fathers, sisters and brothers. But, sir, some who were not under trial and who had committed nothing worthy of bonds or of death, were much agitated and their tears of sympathy, if I may call it sympathy, were sufficient to try the stoutest hearts. Willis Ballenger in this scene of distress struck up a suitable hymn, and Thomas Morton called out for all those in favor of the ancient order of things to repair to one side of the house, which they did and after singing were comforted by several short addresses from Thomas Morton and Harvey Holton and all united in prayer and broke up as saints of the Most High God should do, while their cruel persecutors went away without a word of prayer or praise, having satisfied themselves in finishing the work committed to their hands by those who stood behind the curtain.

You ought to have the preamble and resolution excluding the nineteen members and if the Clerk will be as good as his word you shall have it, for it is a rare morsel and will "look pretty in a book."

These excluded brethren meet every first day of the week and on the last Sunday in December were thirty-five in number and will, I hope, continue in all the ordinances blameless, and have added to them daily such as will be saved. But such is the opinion

produced by priestcraft that we shall have to be "all things to all men" for a while, for the sake of immersing believers, that none may doubt its efficacy; and we hope to see the day when, as all are "*Kings* and *Priests* to God, any will have the right that is now exclusively claimed by the clergy.

A KENTUCKIAN.

January 3, 1830.

ERRONEOUS STATEMENTS CORRECTED.

We, the Baptist Church of Jesus Christ in Louisville, deeply regretting the unhappy division which took place at our October meeting, contrary to our desire or approbation, and in despite of our united efforts to prevent it; and on account of the turbulence and disorder attending it, so disgraceful to that Holy Religion which we profess; which has given rise to many unfair statements and false charges, calculated and designed to mislead the mind of the public, and prejudice the feelings of our brethren against us, by styling us *Campbellites*, under which name we are charged with believing and practising many dangerous and heretical doctrines: such as, that the Old Testament is abrogated, and of no more use; that no one is authorised of Heaven to preach the Gospel since the days of the Apostles; that we deny Christian experience, and the influence of the Holy Spirit in the salvation of the soul, or in order to becoming a Christian; that any person, by reading the Scriptures and *barely saying* he believes in Jesus Christ, and by being immersed in water, is born again; that no person can be saved who cannot *read* the Holy Scriptures, or who is not immersed, and that we are opposed to associating with our sister churches, to church records, or church discipline, or church order, &c. &c.: all of which charges we deny, and aver that they are false and unfounded; and we would have our brethren, and the public generally, to give them no credence whatever. We cheerfully acknowledge that we do entertain the

common christian love and respect for brother Alex-
Campbell; and while he continues a worthy and exam-
plary disciple of our Lord Jesus Christ, it is our desire
to cultivate the same good will towards him, and all
others whose conduct merits it; and although we do
believe he has ably defended and supported the truth
of Christian immersion, and with a masterly hand refu-
ted the traditional custom of infant baptism, and infant
sprinkling in his debates with Messrs. Walker and
McCalla; and more especially his successful defence of
Christianity against the formidable attacks of Robert
Owen and other modern sceptics, and on many other
topics as a writer and a Christian Teacher, he has dis-
played great energy in advocating the faith and order
of the ancient Apostolic Gospel: on account of those
laudable exertions which he has made to revive and
unfold primitive Christianity, justice and honesty forb-
bid our joining with his enemies in a crusade against
him, in denouncing him as a "heretic," "deceiver,"
"impostor," &c. and in refusing to shut our doors
against him, thereby denying him common civility and
hospitality.

Yet we refuse most obstinately to be called by his
name, or that he shall be styled our Master or Leader.
We do vehemently protest against, and unequivocally
renounce, Campbellism, Fullerism, Calvinism, Armin-
ianism, Unitarianism, and every other human "ism"
toto caelo, which the mystery of iniquity has introduced
into the Christian world, and hereby publish to the
world the following asseverations: That we do from
our heart believe and receive the Scriptures of the Old
and New Testaments to be the only Word of the Liv-
ing God given to man for his salvation, and that the
New Testament is the only divinely authorized con-
stitution, rule, and directory of faith and practice of
the Christian Church; and we, having been immersed
upon the profession of our faith in the Lord Jesus
Christ, do acknowledge him, and *him only*, to be our
Prophet, Priest, and King, our *only Lord and Master*

to whose authority we feel ourselves bound to submit in all thing whatever he has commanded. And we would further state, that we have no wish or intention to separate from the General Union of the Baptists in Kentucky, or from the Long Run Association, and that we have no wish to change the constitution on which we have stood for several years. We would also state, that for many of those who have swerved from us we still feel the most tender affection as the disciples of Jesus Christ, and while we do wish grace, mercy and peace to be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, we will strive to live in peace with all men so far as in us lies.

Done by order of the Church in session, December 25th, 1830.

BENJ. ALLEN, *Moderator.*

JOHN BLEDSOE, *Clk.*

EXHORTATION—No. III.

UNION. "United we stand, divided we fall," has justly been inscribed upon family, national and theological escutcheons. Since Æsop's days this truth has been taught in parables and confirmed by history.

In most communities west of the mountains the "reformation" has made more or less progress, all efforts to the contrary notwithstanding. Jesus came not to send peace on earth but a sword. That is, the effect of his doctrine among the sectarys of the day was to produce many confusions, owing to the conversion of some and the opposition of others. Similar effects are produced at this time by the reformation; and it is a desideratum to know how far the disciples ought to conciliate in order to produce union. By a reference to the allusion already made, we may be instructed. Jesus spake kindly to the body of the people, for though often deceived and erroneous, they were more consciencious than their rulers. The Sadducees were principally the rich, the scribes public and private clerks, the pharisees, a self constituted order of devo-

tees and the Herodians the political adherents of Herod, who held his throne by permission of the Roman Emperor; but all these taken together made but a small proportion of the Jewish nation. To these privileged orders Jesus often spake in terms of the severest reprehension, according to their demerit. He never disguised their true character, (and in this he was imitated by his apostles,) but in his addresses to the multitude he would reason and intreat, argue and advise with his characteristic mildness, which seldom failed exciting an interest in some of his auditory. The conscientious he taught and encouraged; the arts of the deceivers and their characters he disclosed.

Jesus is our pattern. His example is our rule. Let all the disciples endeavor to promote order and union, but never, brethren, never surrender principle, never compromise your rights or Jesus' commandments. Any union at the expense of these will not find the countenance of him who said "ye are not of the world." With all be courteous, with all be decisive, and your friends will be true, while your enemies can but admire. Subservient to this course you may exercise the kindest feelings towards the multitude and use any lawful means with specific reference to the melioration of their condition; and you may all exercise the strictest equity towards the interested opposers.

But if we do not come into the popular measures unauthorized by our King, we are called disorganizers and are said to be hostile to union. But I am confident that this is a mistake. No disciples of the ancient order can be disorganizers. That course belongs to the modern order of things. There can be no union of light and darkness.

But holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, let me exhort you to a course that will avoid unnecessary cavilling. Meekness and humility themselves will be mighty arguments for you. Present your propositions, your evidences and your motives; and if this sowing of the seed, watered with your tears of

solicitude and your prayers, should fail, further than this you can do nothing, save continue in well doing with patience. Beloved brethren, thus doing, your circumstances even in these perilous times will in a good measure be bettered and your cause will be honored. Let your motto be, "suaviter in modo, fortiter in re."

EDITOR.

THE PRESENT ORDER OF THINGS—No. VI.

Mode of worship. Praise. Christianity is the summation of the revelations and systems originated in heaven for the melioration of mankind. Its natural influence is to bring us nearer to God than any of the systems that preceded it. As it confers the highest blessings, it calls for the most unreserved acknowledgements and the most exalted praises: and proportionate to the multiplicity of its developements and favors, must be the frequency of the christian's praises. Hence the breath of the disciples should be thanksgiving.

A careful examination of the scriptures will convince any disciple that thanksgiving was the principal part of prayer among the primitive christians; and an examination of the times will convince him that complaining is the chief ingredient in modern supplication. The praise of God in the personal address of prayer is one of the most delightful parts of worship.

Singing Praise. In these essays I have to present the ancient and modern order of things in contrast, therefore they must appear upon the same page. Had there been no such thing as music or musical taste, praise would have been confined to prayer; but religion embraces the whole man in its exercises, and vocal music, the natural expression of boldest, tender and refined feeling and of the sublime in sentiment, is enlisted in the divine service, where it is intended to subserve the highest interests of devotion. But singing praise can be, and is, much abused. Some supposing the harmony of sound and the mere animal sensations procured, to be all that is desirable in church

singing, have paid no attention to either the selection of words or sentiment. With such the tune is every thing. Suffice it to say that a *tuneful propensity* can be satisfied at places of popular amusement where religion is named only to be ridiculed. Others, if the verses express any thing like devotion, are edified; and whether the spirit of that devotion is judaical, pharisaical or Mahomedan, with them is immaterial. That all that has the appearance of devotion is not acceptable to God, is obvious from the stories of Aaron and the golden calf, and Elijah and the prophets of Baal. We would make no invidious comparisons, but it is true that not every thing that is called devotional accords with the spirit of the christian institution.

There is the same necessity for singing truth that there is for speaking truth: and as it is now the practice of all denominations to sing and pray, as well as preach their peculiar tenets, as often as they engage in the exercises, it would be well for the disciples to confine themselves, in singing praise, to a simple versification of scripture truth, excluding all the terms and phrases expressive of sectarian dogmas. I cannot sing any of the abortions of the age. Though I stop in the middle of a piece, I will not betray myself into the praise of the peculiarity of any modern leader. In the common books, nine tenths of the hymns contain more or less of the inferences or assumptions of the sects.

In worship singing is employed for praise. At least so it was in old times. The praise of God and the Lamb makes heaven resound; and to imitate its inhabitants is the highest work of mortals. Hence praise should be the object of all singing in worship, whether you sing heroic achievements of past ages, excellencies of character or the glowing prospect of time yet untold, your song should be praise. Though historic facts and prophetic disclosures are justly entitled to a place in our sacred songs, yet I am convinced that the major part of our praise should relate to the works,

word and person of our God. What an unbounded field opens itself here to our view! No christian should be at a loss for an object of praise. Some object, however, to confining your singing so much to praise; but for my own part I see no reason for the objection. Let the christian place before his mind's eye his God and his favors; remission of sins, his spirit's presence, the pledge of the resuscitation of all that the grave claims and an eternity of increasing grandeur and felicity; and with this display of all that is exciting and inspiring, let him say (if he can,) that the preceding remarks allow the praise of God too heavy claims upon our devotional songs.

There is nothing in individual conversions and experiences, that deserves the comparison of a moment with these themes, and I can see no propriety in making them the basis of a song of praise. Privately, individuals or small circles, according to circumstances, may gratify and perhaps instruct themselves by versifying and expressing in harmony of sound any true sentiment concerning themselves, but in the public congregation we do not worship ourselves. There we worship God. This is but a tythe of what may with propriety be said upon this subject.

EDITOR.

INQUIRIES—No. VII.

How was the Jewish religion propagated? Perhaps some of our readers have not reflected, that in all the divine commands received and recorded by Moses, not one establishes an order of clergy or religious teachers. The Israelites were instructed by Jehovah to teach their children in all their generations, making every sire a religious instructor and every family a congregation. True, long before the Saviour came, they erected synagogues or houses devoted to religious instruction and judicial proceedings, in which they met every Sabbath, (and the Saviour and Apostles often met with them,) but their exercises consisted principally in reading the Jewish scriptures, which were so divi-

ded for this purpose, as to be read through every year, making a regular lesson every Sabbath. They had occasional exhortations, &c. and the scribes and pharisees sometimes warped the sacred oracles in expositions, but Israel's God never authorized an order of men like our modern clergy. I make these observations for the introduction of a quere:

Whereas it is well known that Judaism promised neither spirit nor spiritual blessings and that Christianity promises and confers both: and whereas our efforts to restore the reading and teaching and believing and obeying the simple apostolic writings, are strongly opposed by the advocates of modern degeneracy; **QUERY**, What opinion can they have of the efficiency of the christian scriptures, with all their spirituality, while they deny to the reading, understanding and obeying of them the power, which in their partiality, they attribute to reading, understanding and obeying the writings of Moses? However, with some no contradiction involves absurdity, if it favors mysticism or any of its darling projects.

EDITOR.

From the London World.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN ENGLAND AND SCOTLAND.

Religious liberty in Scotland is happily free from the disabilities by which it is shackled and disgraced in England. In Scotland the Universities exacting no religious tests, are open to sects, to men of all religions, and of no religions. Every man may preach, and in every place, from the one extremity of the country to the other, without a license for himself, or for the place he preaches. In England there is a registry of baptism, from which the Dissenters are debarred; in Scotland there is a registry of births, to which all have equal access; in England all Dissenters, except Quakers, Moravians and Jews, in the article of marriage, must submit to the forms of the establishment and receive the rite at the hands of one

of the clergy of the Established Church; in Scotland after the regular proclamation of banns, any minister of any denomination may perform the nuptial ceremony; in England, places of worship are taxed as dwelling houses; in Scotland, there is no tax on any place of worship; in England, in churchyards belonging to the Established Church, none can perform the burial service but a minister of this church; but in Scotland any one may perform the burial-service in any burying ground, or they may bury without any service; in England, a Dissenting magistrate must strip himself of the insignia of his office when he goes to his own place of worship, but in Scotland Dissenters are not subject to this degradation. Thus the religious liberty of Scotland is more complete than that of England; and if the Dissenters of England suffer another session of Parliament to pass without emancipating themselves from the tyranny of the Church of England, they are unworthy of the blessings of liberty. All these grievances should become the subject of a distinct petition to both Houses of Parliament. If in Scotland there is less theoretical, there is, in fact, more practical liberty. Let Mr. Brougham and others reflect on these things, and they will blush for the spiritual slavery and mental degradation of England.

From the Christian Spectator.

IT IS CONTRARY TO EXPERIENCE.

An Infidel Objection.

But we are gravely told, and with an air of great seeming wisdom, that all presumption and experience are against the miraculous facts in the New Testament. And it was for some time, deemed proof of singular philosophical sagacity in Hume, that he made the discovery, and put it on record to enlighten mankind. For our part, we think far more attention was bestowed on this sophistry than was required; and but for the show of confident wisdom with which it was put forth, we think the argument of Campbell

might have been spared. It might safely be admitted we suppose, that all presumption and experience were against miracles before they were wrought,—and this is no more than saying that they were not wrought before they were. The plain matter of fact, apart from all labored metaphysics, is, that there is a *presumption* against most facts until they actually take place, because till that time all experience was against them. Thus there were many presumptions against the existence of such a man as Julius Cæsar. No man would have ventured to predict that there would be such a man. There were a thousand probabilities that a man of that name would not live—as many that he would not cross the Rubicon—as many that he would not enslave his country—and as many that he would not be slain by the hand of such a man as Brutus,—and all this was contrary to experience.

So any great discovery in science or art, is previously improbable and contrary to experience. We have often amused ourselves with contemplating what would have been the effect on the mind of Archimides, had he been told of the power of one of the most common elements—an element which men who see boiling water must always see—its mighty energy in draining deep pits in the earth, in raising vast rocks of granite in propelling vessels with a rapidity and beauty of which the ancients knew nothing, and in driving a thousand wheels in the minutest and most delicate works of art. To the ancient world all this was contrary to experience, and all presumption was against it,—as improbable certainly as that God should have power to raise the dead; and we doubt whether any evidence of divine revelation would have convinced mankind three thousand years ago, without the actual experiment of what the school boy may now know as a matter of sober and daily occurrence, in the affairs of the world.

So, not long since, the Copernican system of astronomy was so improbable, that for maintaining it, Galileo

endured the pains of the dungeon. All presumption and all experience it was thought was against it. Yet by the discoveries of Newton, it has been made to the great mass of mankind devoid of all its improbabilities, and children acquiesce in its reasonableness. So the oriental king could not be persuaded that water could ever become hard. It was full of improbabilities, and contrary to all experience. The plain matter of fact is, that in regard to all events in history, and all discoveries in science, and inventions in the mechanic arts, there may be said to be a presumption against their existence just as there were in regard to miracles; and they are contrary to all experience, until discovered, just as miracles are, until performed. And if this be all that infidelity has to affirm in the boasted argument of Hume, it seems to be ushering into the world, with every unnecessary pomp, a very plain truism,—that a new fact in the world is contrary to all experience, and this is the same as saying that a thing is contrary to experience until it actually is experienced.

A view of the Internal Evidence of the Christian Religion.

I mean not here to depreciate the proofs arising from either prophecies, or miracles; they both have or ought to have their proper weight; prophecies are permanent miracles, whose authority is sufficiently confirmed by their completion, and are therefore solid proofs of the supernatural origin of a religion, whose truths they were intended to testify; such are those to be found in various parts of the Scriptures relative to the coming of the Messiah, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the unexampled state in which the Jews have ever since continued, all so circumstantially descriptive of the events, that they seem rather histories of past, than predictions of future transactions; and whoever will seriously consider the immense distance of time between some of them and the events which they foretel, the uninterrupted chain by which they are

connected for many thousand years, how exactly they correspond with those events, and how totally inapplicable they are to all others in the history of mankind; I say, whoever considers these circumstances, he will scarcely be persuaded to believe, that they can be the productions of preceding artifice, or posterior application, or can entertain the least doubt of their being derived from supernatural inspiration.

It would not be difficult to prove, that these books were written soon after those extraordinary events, which are the subjects of them; as we find them quoted, and referred to by an uninterrupted succession of writers from those to the present times: nor would it be less easy to show, that the truth of all those events, miracles only excepted, can no more be reasonably questioned, than the truth of any other facts recorded in any history whatever; as there can be no more reason to doubt, that there existed such a person as Jesus Christ, speaking, acting, and suffering in such a manner as is there described, than that there were such men as Tiberius, Herod, or Pontius Pilate, his contemporaries: or to suspect, that Peter, Paul, and James were not the authors of those epistles, to which their names are affixed, than that Cicero and Pliny did not write those which are ascribed to them. It might also be made appear, that these books, having been wrote by various persons at different times, and in distant places, could not possibly have been the work of a single impostor, nor of a fraudulent combination, being all stamped with the same marks of an uniform originality in their very frame and composition.

But all these circumstances I shall pass over unobserved, as they do not fall in with the course of my argument, nor are necessary for the support of it. Whether these books were wrote by the authors whose names are prefixed to them, whether they have been enlarged, diminished, or any way corrupted by the artifice or ignorance of translators, or transcribers; whether in the historical parts the writers were instructed by a

perpetual, a partial, or by any inspiration at all; whether in the religious and moral parts, they received their doctrines from a Divine influence, or from the instructions and conversation of their master; whether in their facts or sentiments there is always the most exact agreement, or whether in both they sometimes differ from each other: whether they are in any case mistaken, or always infallible, or ever pretended to be so, I shall not here dispute; let the deist avail himself of all these doubts and difficulties, and decide them in conformity to his own opinions, I shall not contend, because they affect not my argument. All that I assert is a plain fact, which cannot be denied, that such writings do now exist.

My second proposition is not quite so simple, but, I think, not less undeniable than the former, and is this: That from this book may be extracted a system of religion entirely new, both with regard to the object and the doctrines; not only infinitely superior to, but totally unlike every thing, which had ever before entered into the mind of man. I say extracted, because all the doctrines of this religion having been delivered at various times, and on various occasions, and here only historically recorded, no uniform or regular system of theology is here to be found; and better, perhaps, it had been, if less labor had been employed by the learned, to bend and twist these divine materials into the polished forms of human systems, to which they never will submit, and for which they never were intended by their great Author.

First, then, the object of this religion is entirely new, and is this, to prepare us by a state of probation for the kingdom of heaven. This is every where professed by Christ and his apostles to be the chief end of the Christian's life; the crown for which he is to contend, the goal to which he is to run, the harvest which he is to reap, the harvest which is to pay him for all his labors. Yet, previous to their preaching, no such prize was

ever held out to mankind, nor any means prescribed for the attainment of it.

It is indeed true, that some of the philosophers of antiquity entertained notions of a future state, but mixed with much doubt and uncertainty. Their legislators also endeavored to infuse into the minds of the people a belief of rewards and punishments after death; but by this they only intended to give a sanction to their laws, and to enforce the practice of virtue for the benefit of mankind in the present life. This alone seems to have been their end, and a meritorious end it was; but Christianity not only operates more effectually to this end, but has a nobler design in view, which is by a proper education here to render us fit members of a celestial society hereafter. In all former religions the good of the present life was the first object; in the Christian it is but the second; in those, men were incited to promote that good by the hope of a future reward; in this, the practice of virtue is enjoined in order to qualify them for that reward. There is great difference, I apprehend, in these two plans, that is in adhering to virtue from its present utility in expectation of future happiness, and living in such a manner as to qualify us for the acceptance and enjoyment of that happiness; and the conduct and dispositions of those, who act on these different principles, must be no less different. On the first, the constant practice of justice, temperance, and sobriety, will be sufficient; but on the latter, we must add to these an habitual piety, faith, resignation, and contempt of the world. The first may make us very good citizens, but will never produce a tolerable Christian. Hence it is that Christianity insists more strongly, than any preceding institution, religious or moral, on purity of heart, and a benevolent disposition; because these are absolutely necessary to its great end; but in those, whose recommendations of virtue regard the present life only, and whose promised rewards in another were low and sensual, no preparatory qualifications were requisite to

enable men to practice the one, or to enjoy the other. And, therefore, we see this object is peculiar to this religion; and with it was entirely new.

But although this object, and the principle on which it is founded, were new, and perhaps undiscoverable by reason, yet, when discovered, they are so consonant to it, that we cannot but readily assent to them. For the truth of this principle, that the present life is a state of probation and education to prepare us for another, is confirmed by every thing which we see around us; it is the only key which can open to us the designs of Providence in the economy of human affairs, the only clue, which can guide us through the pathless wilderness, and the only plan on which this world could possibly have been formed, or on which the history of it can be comprehended or explained. It could never have been formed on a plan of happiness; because it is everywhere overspread with innumerable miseries; nor of misery, because it is interspersed with many enjoyments. It could not have been constituted for a scene of wisdom and virtue, because the history of mankind is little more than a detail of their follies and wickedness; nor of vice, because that is no plan at all, being destructive of all existence, and consequently of its own. But on this system all that we here meet with may be easily accounted for; for this mixture of happiness and misery, of virtue and vice, necessarily results from a state of probation and education; as probation implies trials, sufferings, and a capacity of offending, and education a propriety of chastisement for those offences.

And here I cannot omit observing, that the personal character of the author of this religion is no less new, and extraordinary, than the religion itself, who "spake as never man spake" (John vii, 46) and lived as never man lived: in proof of this, I do not mean to allege, that he was born of a virgin, that he fasted forty days, that he performed a variety of miracles, and after being buried three days, that he arose from the dead; be-

cause these accounts will have but little effect on the minds of unbelievers, who, if they believe not the religion, will give no credit to the relation of these facts; but I will prove it from facts, which cannot be disputed; for instance, he is the only founder of a religion in the history of mankind, which is totally unconnected with all human policy and government, and therefore totally unconducive to any worldly purpose whatever; all others, Mahomet, Numa, and even Moses himself, blended their religious institutions with their civil, and by them obtained dominion over their respective people; but Christ neither aimed at, nor would accept of any such power; he rejected every object, which all other men pursue, and made choice of all those which others fly from, and are afraid of: he refused power, riches, honors, and pleasure, and courted poverty, ignominy, tortures, and death. Many have been the enthusiasts and impostors, who have endeavored to impose on the world pretended revelations, and some of them from pride, obstinacy, or principle, have gone so far as to lay down their lives rather than retract; but I defy history to show one, who ever made his own sufferings and death a necessary part of his original plan, and essential to his mission; this Christ actually did, he foresaw, foretold, declared their necessity, and voluntarily endured them. If we seriously contemplate the divine lessons, the perfect precepts, the beautiful discourses, and the consistent conduct of this wonderful person, we cannot possibly imagine, that he could have been either an idiot or a madman; and yet, if he was not what he pretended to be, he can be considered in no other light; and even under this character he would deserve some attention, because of so sublime and rational an insanity there is no other instance in the history of mankind.

Dr. Godman's Letter.

"In relation to dying, my dear friend, you talk like a sick man, and just as I used to do, when very despondent; death is a debt we all owe to nature, and must

eventually ensue from a mere wearing out of the machine, if not from disease. The time when, makes no difference in the act of dying to the individual; for after all, it terminates in corporeal insensibility, let the preceding anguish be never so severe. Nature certainly has a strong abhorrence to this cessation of corporeal action, and all animals have a dread of death, who are conscious of its approach. A part of our dread of death is purely physical, and is avoidable only by a philosophical conviction of its necessity; but the greater part of our dread, and the terrors with which the avenues to the grave are surrounded, are from another, and a more potent source. "Tis conscience that makes cowards of us all," and forces us in our terrors to confess that we dread something beyond physical dissolution, and we are terrified, not at merely ceasing to breathe, but that we have not lived as we ought to have done, have not effected the good that was within our abilities, and neglected to exercise the talents we possessed to the greatest advantage. The only remedy for this fear of death is to be sought by approaching the Author of all things, in the way prescribed by himself, and not according to our own foolish imaginations. Humiliation of pride, denial of self, subjection of evil tempers and dispositions, and an entire submission to his will for support and direction, are the best preparatives for such an approach. A perusal of the Gospel, in a spirit of real inquiry, after a direction how to act, will certainly teach the way. In those Gospels the Saviour himself has preached his own doctrines, and he who runs may read. He has prescribed the course; he shows how the approval and mercy of God may be won; he shows how awfully corrupt is man's nature, and how deadly his pride and stubbornness of heart, which causes him to try every subterfuge to avoid the humiliating confession of his own weakness, ignorance and folly. But the same blessed hand has stripped death of all the terrors which brooded around the grave, and converted the gloomy

receptacle of our mortal remains into the portal of life and light. Oh! let me die the death of the righteous, let my last end and future state be like his.

This is all I know on the subject.—I am no theologian, and have as great an aversion to priestcraft as one can entertain. I was once an infidel, as I told you in the West Indies. I became a christian from conviction, produced by the candid enquiry recommended to you. I know of no other way in which death can be stripped of its terrors; certainly none better can be wished. Philosophy is a fool, and pride a madman. Many persons die with what is called *manly firmness*; that is, having acted a part all their lives according to their prideful creed, they must die *game*. They put on as smooth a face as they can, to impose on the spectators, and die *firmly*. But this is all deception; the true state of their minds at the very time, nine times out of ten, is worse than the most horrible imaginings even of hell itself. Some who led lives adapted to sear their conscience and petrify all the moral sensibilities, die with a kind of indifference, similar to that with which a hardened convict submits to a new infliction of disgraceful punishment. But the man who dies as a man ought to die, is the humble minded, believing christian; one who has tasted and enjoyed all the blessings of creation, who has had an enlightened view of the wisdom and glory of his creator, who has felt the vanity of mere worldly pursuits and motives, and been permitted to know the mercies of a blessed Redeemer, as he approaches the narrow house appointed for all the living.

Physical death may cause his senses to shrink and fail at the trial; but his mind, sustained by the Rock of Ages, is sincere and unwavering. He relies not on his own righteousness, for that would be vain; but the arms of mercy are beneath him, the ministering spirits of the Omnipotent are around him. He does not die manfully, but he rests in Jesus; he blesses his friends, he casts his hope on one all powerful to sustain and mighty to save, then sleeps in peace.